

Submitted by Task Force Members Chairman Jan Davis (Asheville City Council), Max Alexander (Civic Center Commission), Terry Bellamy (Asheville City Council), Sidney Powell (Asheville Center for the Performing Arts), Ron Storto (Tourism Development Authority), and Charles Worley (Asheville City Council). Buncombe County Commissioners are scheduled to appoint a representative to the task force on Nov. 8.

### **Civic Center Task Force Progress Report for October 26, 2005**

The Asheville community takes pride in our vibrant culture - one that embraces the arts, heritage and entertainment as an important and lively part of our city and the region. Given the prominence of these qualities in our culture, many of us have been disheartened by the condition of the Asheville Civic Center. Our area's core facility for the performing arts, concerts, large trade shows and a number of other celebrated events and performances is in need of significant repairs and enhancements.

When City Council decided last month to form this Civic Center task force, they charged us with proposing a strategy for: (1) developing the Asheville Civic Center as a regional hub for events, entertainment and community gatherings and; (2) generating community support to advocate and fund-raise for Civic Center enhancements. Although past groups have evaluated the Civic Center and its options, every member of this task force is committed to moving forward with a strong commitment to putting a recommendation into action.

The task force met for the first time on October 26. The purpose was primarily organizational - to review task force goals, processes and timeframes. During the meeting, the group defined guiding principles to ensure our success in developing a set of strategic recommendations. These principles state that the task force will:

- Work with an open perspective to represent all citizens and the best interests of the community;
- Effectively manage our time and resources to stay on schedule and present a recommendation to City Council on Feb 28;
- Involve the public and enter into a community dialogue with a broad spectrum of citizens and key stakeholder groups; and,
- Develop a finite, well-defined and realistic recommendation behind which the city, county and community can unite.

After defining these principles, we reviewed a draft action plan outlining our schedule, major milestones and public communications plan. Based on our plan and initial discussions, the task force's work will involve intensive research, outreach efforts and evaluation.

Our action plan calls for us to interview entertainment professionals, business representatives, community leaders, sports industry professionals and local arts supporters. In addition, we will reach out to representatives from similar communities to benchmark how other facilities have been developed, supported and operated. We will study economic impact analyses and evaluate financial implications of different models. Together with the community, we will learn about opportunities and challenges of advancing a facility for entertainment, the performing arts, sporting events and community gatherings.

In the course of these efforts, we will be proactive in providing information to and soliciting input from the public. We will encourage citizen questions and feedback through forums, individual meetings, focus groups, surveys and other methods. All task force meetings are open to the public and will be televised on the Asheville Channel, Charter Cable channel 11. Citizens will be encouraged to speak and be heard during these meetings. Task Force agendas, contact information, action plans, supporting documents, background information and progress reports will be posted at [www.ashevillenc.gov](http://www.ashevillenc.gov).

Future task force meetings will be held in the Civic Center Banquet Hall at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 21. Future meeting dates include Dec. 5, Jan. 4, Jan. 18, Jan. 23, Feb. 1 and Feb. 6. Additional dates may be added to accommodate the task force's needs for information as well as time for evaluation, discussion and public involvement.

Every task force member has joined this effort in the spirit of cooperation, collaboration and community service. We are eager to get started, work hard and deliver a plan that reflects citizen input. We're in this together, as a task force and a community – both inside the city and out. We're kicking off a community-wide effort, and our success depends on your support and involvement. We encourage you to be a part of a renewed enthusiasm to address our Civic Center and create solution that makes us all proud.